

# NINIAN WINZET: ABBOT OF RATISBON 1577 - 1592

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In that great upheaval, known as the Reformation in the 16th century, the Christian world was shaken to its depths. The old order called for drastic change if civilisation was not to drift to irreparable disaster; and in face of relentless opposition the leaders of religious and social revolution in many lands led their followers to victory through suffering and conflict with a courage that refused to acknowledge defeat.

The corruptions and abuses that had outraged conscience and made religion an offence to many lovers of truth and right seemed to demand the uprooting of a system which was to them the source of wrong thinking and of evil living. There were those who were convinced that only by destroying the Roman dominion without compromise could the work of reformation be effectually done. They acted with decision and determination, making almost a complete break with all that had marked the medieval Church, and it may well be that they lost some of the wheat while casting away the tares. But, speaking for the Scots alone, the record of the Church was heart-breaking and shameful, and for at least 100 years before 1560 it had been heading for ruin.

Even the upholders and defenders of the ancient regime were conscious of the scandals and disorders that were rampant. Satirists and poets of the time pilloried the Estate of the Scottish Church and held it up to laughter and contempt. With the beginning of the 16th century the state of Scotland was serious indeed. Not only the internal disorders of Church and State, but the constant clash of French and English interests kept the country in constant danger and involved the people in hardship, poverty and misery. Queen Mary is said to have been moved to tears at the thought of their appalling distress.

When in May, 1560, Knox settled in Edinburgh he became the commanding figure in the revolt which for years had been gathering momentum against the Church, and things began to move quickly in the direction of radical reform. Knox arrived in Scotland on May 2nd, 1559. He spent the succeeding year in Dundee, Perth and St. Andrews preaching the urgent need of Reform. Besides this he acted as Secretary to the Congregation during the darkest days of the political struggle with the Regent,

Mary of Lorraine, and her French supporters. In 1560 the way was open for his return to Edinburgh and St. Giles. He was supported by a number of the nobility who were known as "the Lords of the Congregation," who in 1557 had entered into a bond or covenant "to maintain, set forward and establish the blessed Word of God and his Congregation." They exercised great influence on the movement for reform in State and Church. He was joined by a considerable number of the clerical order who were dissatisfied with the conduct of those in authority, especially the Bishops who had ceased to be shepherds of the flock and were apparently incapable of remedying a state of affairs which defied their feeble efforts, handicapped as they were by their own shortcomings and the unchristian lives they led.

The greatest part of the Scottish priesthood held aloof from or were opposed to the struggle initiated and carried on by the Reformers. But there were a few who, powerless to stem the flood of evil, yet anxious for reform and a real change for the better in the Church, clung to the past, and believed in the restoration of religious faith and practice, and a real reform while still remaining loyal to the ancient order under which they and their fellow countrymen had so long lived. The tide was against them, but the ancient Catholic Church, with all its confessed failures, was for them, in spite of its apostasies, the true Church of God. As events showed, they were engaged in a contest in which the forces of their antagonists proved to be the stronger, and they were driven out of the country or went voluntarily into exile as defenders of the old faith and the old order. The future for centuries was to be in the hands of those who stood for a new form of the faith and a return to what they believed was based on the written Word of God alone.

I

Ninian Winzet (pronounced Winyet) modern Wyngate, and Quintin Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel, were the principal literary and theological defenders of the old order. Both entered the lists against Knox and his allies.

Winzet studied at the University of Glasgow where in 1539 he graduated at the age of 22 as Bachelor and Master of Arts. He appears in the College records as "William Winzet," and why he assumed the name of "Ninian" is not known, for it is a fact that he was not a member of any order of monks who, on entering the Community, changed their Christian name. In the Papal Bull appointing Winzet Abbot of Ratisbon in 1577 it is expressly stated that the Pope, plenitudine potestatis, exempted him from

undergoing the usual monastic probation required from those who had not been monks before they were promoted to the office of abbot.

Winzet describes himself on the title page of certain tracts which he published in 1562 as "Ane Catholike priest borne in Renfrew." Attracted to educational work among the youth of Scotland, at the age of 32 he was appointed Master of Linlithgow Grammar School. This was in 1551. Linlithgow was then a place of great importance, and it had within its walls a royal palace in which James V and his daughter Mary were born. In Linlithgow Winzet remained ten years, though there is nothing in the town's records about him or his work. He had great regard for the profession of teaching. To him it was a sacred vocation. His favourite method of instruction was to get the senior pupils to write essays in Latin on subjects of vital importance.

Then the storm burst. The religious revolution in Scotland had come. In 1561 Winzet was called before John Spottiswoode, Superintendent of Lothian, which took in the district from Stirling to Dunbar. Spottiswoode was one of the five superintendents appointed by the Protestants to take the place of the deposed bishops, as a temporary measure to meet the needs of a disorganised Church. Born in 1510 he was ordained by Archbishop Cranmer. Returning to Scotland in 1543 he became Vicar of Calder in 1547. In 1560 he joined the Reformers and became Superintendent of Lothian on 9th May, 1561.

When, after several interviews with the Superintendent, Winzet could not with a clear conscience renounce his faith, he was summarily dismissed from his post. He evidently felt very deeply his dismissal which meant parting with old friends and an end to the work he had deeply loved, and in which he had won no small measure of success.

The education of youth in virtue and learning along with the administration of justice and the devoted service of godly pastors, he believed, was necessary for the well-being of the Kirk of God and the Nation. Without the right training of the young the office of ruler in Church and State was a troublesome business. The Commonwealth suffered when the people were rude and ignorant, unless the youth were instructed in unfeigned obedience and true godliness. "Then the task of government is lightened for the rulers, and life is made pleasant for the ruled."

Winzet was a man of enlightened views on this subject at a time when the Scottish people specially needed the humanising influence of education. He was of one mind with the Reformers in their efforts in the direction of providing schools for the people. They must have had his full support.

<sup>1</sup> The 3rd Tractate.

But unfortunately the man he had to deal with seems to have been rather tactless, and so one who would have been a strength to the Reformed movement was alienated, and became a strong opponent to those he could not respect. A young priest was appointed reformed preacher in Linlithgow, and carried away by his new authority apparently acted in a somewhat highhanded manner towards one in every way his superior. That did not make for peace or understanding. This man, Kinloquhy (sarcastically called "Dean" by Winzet) was a canon of the Augustine Monastery at St. Andrews, and held some post in the Collegiate Church of St. Michael, Linlithgow, before the Reformation. In 1574 he was appointed Vicar of St. Andrews, and in the register of Ministers of that year he appears in charge of Linlithgow. He was invited to be Minister of Edinburgh in 1584, and in that year he refused to acknowledge the authority of the archbishop, for which he was summoned before the Privy Council. In 1589 he was appointed Commissioner for the maintenance of true religion in the sheriffdom of Linlithgow. The last mention of him is in the records of the Synod of Fife regarding a visitation at Linlithgow. The minute reads, "Pat Kinloquhy, auld minister is found to teach none from his age and infirmity."

Of his experience with this preacher Winzet says: "At the command of Dean Patrick Kinloquhy, preacher in Linlithgow, and of his superintendent, when I, for denying to subscribe their phantasie and fiction of faith, was expelled, and shut out of that my kindly town, and from my tender friends there, whose perpetual kindness I hoped that I had won by my spending there about ten of the best years of my life, not without evident usefulness to the community, and to all appearance had obtained such favour of them as any such man might have of any community, I thought I had no cause to be ashamed but to rejoice and glorify my God (according to St. Peter's rule) for that I suffered not as a wicked person or an evildoer, but as an unfeigned and faithful Christian."

II

During his ten years at Linlithgow as Rector of the Grammar School Winzet had devoted himself almost wholly to scholastic work, so he felt himself very inadequately equipped for taking part in religious controversy. His duties had given him very little opportunity for the pursuit of theological learning. And besides his rectorship of the school, the Provostship of the Collegiate Church of St. Michael at Linlithgow was held by him.<sup>1</sup> No man could be more zealous for reform, and none of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ziegelbauer, Historia ordinis S. Benedicti. (Compiled from documents once in the Monastery of Ratisbon.)

revolutionary party ever spoke more strongly against the disorders that everywhere prevailed. He was greatly concerned about the moral and spiritual chaos in high places, both in the social order and in the government and practice of the Church. Pestilence and poverty ravaged the land. It was convulsed with internal disorders. The feuds on the southern borders, and among the Northern Celts, the conflicts of the nobles at the head of bands of armed retainers made civil government well-nigh impossible. The Church suffered grievously from criminal neglect, largely through the granting of benefices to the sons of feudal lords and others totally unfit for the sacred office, many of whom could not even read nor write. Winzet ascribes the evils in the Kirk of Scotland to the low tone of the clergy, which the Bishops and higher clergy had failed to correct, and the inability of the Church to secure a godly and capable Ministry. These are Winzet's own words: "If any of you will object that the priests, bishops and the clergy in our day have been defiled with deformity, and are so ignorant and vicious or both, also scandalous, that they are unworthy the name of pastors, we are right sorry that is true for the most part and more."

The Sacraments were profaned by ignorance, and the ungodly lives of the priests who, often, as mere children, were thrust into the sacred office. This was a very grave scandal of the time. Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel, strongly denounced it. He said: "Bot thou may see daylie ane bairne and ane babe get perchance 5000 saules to gyde." It is evident from what Winzet openly stated that he wholly agreed with the General Convention and Provincial Council held at Edinburgh in 1549, which put on record that the greatest danger threatening the Church was the immorality, ignorance and venality of its Ministers.

Winzet was surprised by the suddenness of the change in the condition of affairs. "I began to marvel not a little at so hasty and so sudden an upturning of this world in so many great matters, and especially of the sudden change of some learned clerks, the silence and fear of others and the most arrogant presumption especially in the ignorant, and among other strange changes when one Kinloquhy could be a king in Linlithgow, and such a king as appropriates to himself larger empire and power in

The Reformed Church did not escape censure for admitting too young men to the Ministry. In the General Assembly of 1562 the Superintendent of Angus was charged with rashly admitting some young men to be Ministers and exhorters without the trial and examination required by the Book of Discipline. The ordinary procedure consisted of election, examination and admission. At first there was no laying on of hands in ordination. Winzet is concerned about the Protestants appointing young people to office in the Church whose only qualification was that they were able to read English, though otherwise they were destitute of any experience of life, or real learning.

this case than ever did faithful king and emperor in Christianity." "At Easter and for several Sundays after," he says, "there was peace everywhere, but in one month's time a change took place, and by Whitsunday they changed their attitude to the plain contrary." The Protestants seemed to have won the day without a struggle. But, though the bishops were silent, all Scots had not forsaken the old order. And Winzet who already on June 28th, 1559, had met John Knox in public conference was not to be lightly esteemed. Knox does not mention this meeting, but it seems to be a fact that they did meet at Linlithgow, when there was a discussion first with Knox and afterwards with Spottiswoode and Kinloquhy on "The blessed Sacrament and the truth of it." It was not as a trained theologian, nor as a practised controversialist that Winzet entered the lists, but as a "faithful Christian." "A theologian I profess me to be none nor yet of the high learned." He continues: "It is known not to be the Kirk rents nor riotous life thereby that moves me to put myself forward in this strife and trial, since of the Kirk rents I never got my living, which now I might have abundantly if I preferred my belly to a good conscience, since I know it was to none unknown that I was a humble son of the Holy Church universal. As for vicious living, abuse and superstition and idolatry I (to God be glory) do utterly abhor, so never from my childhood did I intend to seek the proved arrogance of a schismatic or the obstinate willfulness of a heretic."

#### III

Queen Mary arrived in Edinburgh on the 19th of August, 1561. A week after, she issued a proclamation in reference to differences in Religion which she desired to purify. She forbade any one either in private or in public to advocate or attempt to make any change in the status quo she had found on her arrival in Scotland. To disobey would be an act of treason which would be suppressed with the utmost vigour. This proclamation was fixed on the Cross of Linlithgow on the 29th day of August, 1561. It was intended to be an edict of toleration and was meant to prevent mutual recriminations in religion. The Queen promised that the state of religion in the country would have the royal attention.

Encouraged by this proclamation the ousted clergy reappeared out of the extreme penury in which they were almost lost without any human sympathy, and where they had to worship in "kirkyairds, barns, middens and killogies."

This attempt at a policy of toleration which was then unknown was an offence to the party that was in the ascendant. 100 years later the Westminster Assembly in its Confession and Larger Catechism taught

that it was a sin to tolerate a false religion. Protestantism, supported by the State, continued the policy of the Roman Church in its efforts to destroy heresy. As might have been expected, then, the preachers appealed to the Magistrates of Edinburgh and the Protestant majority re-issued, on 2nd October, 1561, a proclamation against priests ordering them to leave the city on pain of severe punishment. The Queen was naturally incensed, and secured the deposition of the Provost and bailies who were replaced with more loyal citizens.

It was then that Winzet appealed to Queen Mary for fair play in putting the case of the minority. He entitled this the first of his writings as Ane exhortation to the maist excellent and gracious Soverane Marie Queen of Scottis, and to the Bischoipes and utheris pastors, and to all thaim of the nobility within this her Grace's realm. For unfenzeit reformation of doctrine and maneris, and for obtaining of licence to propose in wryt to the precherours of the Protestantis certain artycules tweching doctrine, order and maneris approvin be thaim. In this first tractate Winzet wrote as a sincere reformer, and did not spare the prelates and the nobility. With scathing language he laid bare their evil lives. He declared that the three causes of disorder in the Church were (1) avarice, (2) an evil priesthood, and (3) the conduct of the Gospellers as he calls the Protestant reformers. To the Calvinistic preachers he addressed a spiritual exhortation which ends with these words: "If you intend to establish among us a new Form of religion touching the interpretation of Scriptures, the setting forth of the Sacraments and order in the Kirk unknown to all ages of men before this present, and will adhere to the judgment of no age of men on the matters in controversy between us since the days of the Apostles, but interpret the Scriptures and set a pretended order conform to your fancy, imagination and private opinion we will have you persuaded and certified that by the help of the Omnipotent most merciful, for no fear of your multitude albeit you were 10,000 against 10 of us, that we will not join with you generally in religion as you must surely have intended, nor bear with you in mutual feigned society, in dissimulation by the law of our God, but utterly flee your company as of heathen and renegades not hearing God's Kirk either past or present. Yet hoping in the ineffable Mercy of God to you, and as we shall not cease day and night to pray with most humble minds our Heavenly Father (who makes all His servants of one godly concord in His honour) that for the merits of Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, He would so illuminate your heart with the spirit of humility, soberness and truth that you neither think before God nor answer us arrogantly in strife and dissension, but only as before God and of God and in Christ to His glory and immutable

Will to the godly peace and unity of all those who unfeignedly love Jesus to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all glory and power, virtue and empire for ever. Amen."

When the Act was proclaimed in the spring of 1561 Winzet made a written protest. The populace had marked with chalk the doors of persons suspected of favouring the old order. As a consequence of the proclamation and the results that followed there was rioting in the city. In the tractate which he wrote Winzet tried to win some consideration for the conscientious beliefs of his fellow Catholics. His tract is entitled A declaration to the honourable Provost, Baillies and Council of Edinburgh for the observance of the glad solemnities of the blessed Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany, Resurrection and Ascension of our Saviour with the feast of Whitsunday hastily made one Easter Monday in the year 1561 when there appeared a dangerous sedition in Edinburgh, chalking of the doors on every side as after shall show. But in an age destitute of tolerance the appeal was disregarded. Observance of the great Christian festivals in the Church of Scotland had to wait for three centuries for the recognition of the Christian year as a beautiful and edifying part of Church order. This is one of the things that passed out of the Church's life at the Reformation, and which is only being regained after much delay and real loss to Christian devotion.

Another tractate of Winzet's deals with the lawful vocation of John Knox and his brother preachers to the Protestants of Scotland. The ordination Knox himself received in the ancient Catholic Church he disowned. Winzet therefore asked him for his authority to act as a Minister; also for his authority to elect superintendents and ordain men to the Ministry, and why he debarred from sacred duties educated laymen. Knox never gave an answer in writing to these questions. In a sermon, he said he had been called by God as Amos in the Old Testament, and John Baptist in the New Testament had been. He further declared that he had never ordained any man. Winzet and his friends thought that Knox was obscure and unintelligible in dealing with this question. And none of his followers took up the challenge that Winzet had thrown down.

The last blast of the trumpet of God's wrath against the usurped authority of John Knox and his Calvinian brethren was prepared by Winzet after he had published his three tractates. It was printed, but was never circulated, for one of the Magistrates of Edinburgh accompanied by officers of the Council seized the whole impression and destroyed it so completely that only five leaves of one copy remain. Winzet, who happened to be in the printing office when the edition was suppressed, narrowly escaped arrest. Shortly afterwards he sailed for Flanders and from the Continent

sought to do his Church such service as he could. He never returned, and for 30 years he lived as a voluntary exile from the land of his birth.

At Louvain on 7th October, 1563, appeared *The Book of 4 Score and* 3 *Questions*, preceded by a letter "to the Reader," and ending with a letter addressed to Knox dated Antwerp, 27th October, 1562.

The Buke of 4 scoir and three questions was first printed in Edinburgh in 1561, and is Winzet's principal work. It is described as "the 4 scoir and 3 questions touching doctrine order and manners propounded to the preachers of the Protestants in Scotland, by the Catholics of the inferior order of clergy and laymen there cruelly afflicted and despised by persuasion of the same intruded preachers." In 1594, the book was much praised by the Jesuits who claimed that Winzet in his 83 questions had "all but silenced the ringleaders of the heretics."

The book is a Confession of Faith setting forth the theological beliefs held by the Catholics. It is a counterblast to Confession of Faith and the first book of Discipline set forth by the Scots Reformers, and is well written, very concise and showing intimate acquaintance with the Bible, and the best commentators of the time. When it is remembered that the book was written in a time of great excitement when passions ran high, its moderation of statement is evident. It covered a wide field, taking up one by one the various points at issue: the Church in Society, the Sacraments of the Church, the doctrine of the Real Presence, prayer for the living and the dead, the place and functions of the Priesthood, the orderliness of Worship, and the sanctions of Scripture for ceremonies allowed therein, the duty of the people to obey their lawful ruler and the effects of disobedience. Finally, free will is insisted on, as opposed to the determinism of Luther and Calvin.

Some of the questions deal with the interpretation of the terms used in certain passages of Scripture. A ruling on these things, Winzet says, is not perilous to faith nor does it jeopardise salvation. The Sacraments which vary in number among Protestants from two to seven are not mere signs of a divine reality. Baptism is the seal of acceptance by God. Laxity in administering it should not be allowed; at the same time innocent children should not be made to suffer for the sins of their parents by depriving them of it. Ceremony at baptism may differ in various ways. Even the reformed in Scotland have their own customs in baptism. These do not invalidate the Sacrament. It is impossible to claim Scripture as a warrant for these practices. Tradition has been followed, as it has to be for the observance of Sunday and Easter, and for the acceptance of the Canon of Scripture.

Winzet claimed to be an "unfeigned Christian." "Unfeignedly" is a word often found in his writings. The name of "papist" he indignantly repudiated, and he particularly regarded it as offensive when Knox called him "proctor to the Papists." As a Catholic he said that he defended no novel doctrines. He was a member of the Holy Catholic Church established by God and supported by the Christian fathers for the four early Christian centuries, and by General Councils during the last 1000 years. Reformation of the Church was needed, as it had been needed again and again in the generations that had gone. But it was the reformation of a fallen Church which would be raised by God. It was for reconstruction he laboured, not for destruction which sought to sweep away the ancient landmarks.

Winzet deplored the ignorance of the clergy of his time whom he called "dumb dogs" as did the Supplication sent by the General Assembly to the Lords of "Secreit Councill" in 1561. Just one year before 1560 at the General Provincial Synod it was ordained that "Rectors who could not preach employ substitutes at their own expense; if the rector was young he was to go to school to learn, if he was above 50 years of age he was to attend the Sermons preached by his substitute." In the preface to his translation of the Commonitorium of Vincentious Lirenensis (Antwerp 1563), Winzet pleaded in an address to the Queen for the unity of believers, and urged the need for repentance and confession on the part of Catholics.

"Through the promotion of unqualified Prelates in the Church by the negligence and inordinate affection of your Highness' forbears all this trouble has arisen here as elsewhere, so that the starved people became the prey of pernicious teachers." Patronage with all its attendant evils was seen on every hand. Secular lords got control of Church property, and "Kirk lands" were regularly feued at higher rates to the injury, as Winzet said, of "kyndlie lachful possessours or tenants" who held the land by right of heredity. The Crown claimed the right to present to all vacant benefices, and the royal and baronial influence was exercised in the appointment of Bishops, Abbots, Priors and Vicars. Spiritual offices with their emoluments were given to persons completely destitute of any fitness for the duties required. Five natural sons of James V held in commendam from the time they were 7 or 8 years of age the richest benefices in the Church, viz., the Abbeys of Holyrood, Kelso, Melrose, Coldingham and St. Andrews. The Prelates lived like noblemen of the highest rank. They were chiefly concerned about the acquisition of wealth and power.

The Scots of the 16th century were a people simplex ac rudis, artless and uncultured, and Winzet realised that education was what the

people needed. He expressed astonishment that in the past, amidst so much lavish liberality to the Church, "so little respect has ever been had to Grammar Schules—that in many townis there is not so much provident thairto as a common house, and in nane almaist of all ane sufficient life (maintenance) to ane teacher."

#### IV

During his whole life Winzet was an eager student, and a gifted teacher of youth.

In the year 1563 he translated into "Scottis" his favourite text-book, the writing of Vincentius Lirenensis Adversus profanas hereticorum novationes. This with a long dedication to Queen Mary was published at Antwerp. Vincentius was a monk and presbyter of the monastery of Lerinum. At first a soldier, he wrote three years after the Council of Ephesus 431 A.D. two Commonitoria (the second of which is lost). He was the author of the Standard of Orthodoxy, "Quod ubique quod semper et quod omnibus est conditum" (accepted everywhere and always, and by all).

During 1565 Winzet was in France where he took his degree of M.A. and was thrice appointed one of the proctors of the University of Paris. He became Professor of Philosophy and taught with success at Paris in 1569. In 1567 Winzet's name was on the list of Masters. The proctors were chiefs of the "Nations," and acted as Secretaries and Clerks of the Congregation of the Faculty of Arts. Winzet's name appears again in the sederunt of a Council held in the autumn of 1568, and of another Council held in 1569. His name is not in the Minute Book after 1570.

Queen Mary, while a prisoner in England, had appointed Bishop Leslie her ambassador at the Court of Elizabeth, and Winzet was called from the Sorbonne to do some service for the Queen. In May, 1571, he was sent to join Leslie in London, returning to France in September of the same year. After leaving Paris in 1574 Winzet, in the indefatigable pursuit of learning, went to Douai, where in 1575 he became a Licentiate in Theology. He was now 57 years of age. The degree of Doctor of Divinity had been conferred on him by the University of Paris.

In 1576 Winzet was nominated Abbot of Ratisbon, a Scottish monastery of the Benedictine Order. On the 14th July, 1577, he received at Rome an Abbot's benediction with Episcopal jurisdiction over 14 religious houses. From the Emperor Rudolph II, to whom Queen Mary had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> D. Hay Fleming, The Reformation in Scotland, p. 518.

written favourably of Winzet (describing him as "meus confessarius"), he received an edict on 8th October, 1578, securing the properties of the Scots monasteries within the Empire.

When Winzet arrived at Ratisbon on August 9th, 1577, he found the monastery in ruins and almost deserted. He was met by one monk and a novice. The house had been ruined during the religious wars 30 years before and had not recovered. But Winzet, by his devoted labours, restored Ratisbon, and soon it was a vigorous religious community. The Monastery of St. James was founded in 1090. For 700 years it was the burying place of many Irish and Scottish monks, who were accustomed to rest at Ratisbon on their way to and from the Holy Land when on pilgrimage.

Winzet at once set himself to put the monastery in order. The community grew in numbers, and its prosperity was assured.<sup>2</sup> The educational seminaries were again opened, and the old Scots methods of instruction were followed. Winzet made himself personally responsible for the teaching of the higher subjects, while exercising general supervision of the teaching of the elementary subjects. Professor Turner of Ingolstadt University, who greatly esteemed him, wished that all Benedictines could be trained by him.<sup>3</sup>

While Abbot of Ratisbon, Winzet wrote in Latin the Flagellum Sectariorum, a book in which he shows a good acquaintance with the writings of Calvinists of his time, and makes constant references to them. He also wrote the Velitatio Adversus Georgium Buchananum, a pamphlet of 133 pages in answer to Buchanan's De jure regni apud Scotos (printed in 1579) at Ratisbon, May, 1581. Hereditary rulers he holds are sacrosanct until the Church declares them unfit to govern (p. 18). In this writing Winzet displays a real mastery of Imperial Law. He had once met Buchanan nearly 20 years before when he was giving Latin lessons to the Queen at Holyrood and speaks of him as a man "vultu sana et voci satis moderata."

Winzet was believed by the Scottish Protestants to be a real danger. In a Privy Council proclamation in 1573 his name is among the Scots

- <sup>1</sup> Ratisbon is no longer an Abbey. It was closed in 1862 and the Cloisters converted into a Seminary for the diocese of Ratisbon.
- <sup>2</sup> In the MSS. Ratisbona Religiosa in 4 volumes, which is a record of the history of the monastery, the volume containing the record of the time when Winzet was abbot is missing.
- <sup>3</sup> In Certain Tractates by Ninian Wingate, edited by J. King Hewison for the Scottish Text Society, 1888, there are many interesting notes concerning Winzet.

who were in secret correspondence with disaffected members of the Realm. The Protestants otherwise ignored him, but Bellesheim says he was "the most important Scottish Apologist who, in a storm-tost age, defended the Church's doctrines and institutions with reasons which to this day wait for refutation." Leslie, who was an intimate friend, spoke of him as "a man of exquisite erudition" (De origine, Lib. X, pp. 582-584). Modest in the estimate of his own abilities, and as a rule restrained in language, he reminds us of the old Catholics who opposed the decisions of the General Council of 1870. Of sincere convictions Winzet was indomitable in his zeal for reform and outspoken in his condemnation of the deformities of the old order, and the extravagances of the new. He was disconcerted by the autocratic behaviour of the Protestants whom he regarded as upstart invaders of the Church, and the treatment of himself by men like Kinloquhy and Spottiswoode was harsh and arbitrary.

An enthusiast for education he strove continually to the end of his days in adding to his own learning. He had a wide knowledge of Holy Scripture and of the ancient Christian fathers.

The left wing Protestants repelled one whose line of reform took more conservative and less revolutionary ways. On the fundamentals Winzet was one with all Christians. He was a practical reformer. In one thing he was insistent. That related to the authority for their actions claimed by Protestants. No doubt, he says, God is the final authority for all, but by His own appointment He acts through His visible Church. Has that Church given to others the authority it has received from God? Knox said he had received an extraordinary call, but who had given him authority to call others? Knox himself, he affirmed in somewhat violent language, was the chief author of the misfortunes suffered by Scotland. "In Scotia cruentus quidam architectus seditiorum et pestis maxima."

Wassenbergius, who wrote an account of religious orders at Ratisbon, speaking for the contemporaries of Winzet, says: "He was beloved and honoured and missed by all. He stood almost alone in opposition both to the old order and to the new, pleading for a Reformation after the manner of the best minds in the Council of Trent." Principal Hugh Watt, in his John Knox in Controversy, says: "Ninian Winzet was certainly the most representative of the old order in Scotland at the moment of its disappearance." He speaks of his "acute and fearless criticisms." His writings "throw a flood of light on the critical years of Scottish history and reveal a dogged, dour but rather likeable Scot who will fit neatly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bellesheim, Geschichte der Katholischen Kirche in Schottland (Mainz) 1858. Vol. II, pp. 20-35; gives an interesting account of Winzet.

into none of the familiar categories." "If the Roman Church," he concludes, "had had a few men like Winzet the course of our Scottish history would have been different. . . . On the other hand it is evident that very little would have made Ninian Winzet one of our leading Reformers."

1 Hugh Watt, John Knox in Controversy, p. 47.

## WRITINGS OF N. WINZET.

I. Three Tractates.

2. The four score and three questions.

3. The translation in Scottis of Vincentius Lirenensis for the Antiquities and Verities of the Catholic Fayth—Antwerp, 2nd December, 1563.

4. Flagellum Sectariorum.

5 copies in Staats Bibliothek, Munich.

2 ,, Universitaats Bibliothek, Munich.

1 copy in Ambrosia Library, Milan.

I ,, Doge's Palace, Venice.

ı ,, Barlierini.

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6. Velitatio in Georgium Buchananum-Ingolstadt, 1883.

None of Winzet's writings are found in the Library of the Seminary for which the Cloisters of the Monastery at Ratisbon are now used.

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